

Mr. Speaker, the Second District of Connecticut, which I have the privilege of representing, has a long and proud Naval and seafaring history. We are home to the "The First and Finest," the Naval Submarine Base New London, homeport to Submarine Squadron Two, Four, and Development Squadron Twelve, the Naval Submarine School, and Naval Submarine Support Facility. Thousands of men and women in my district are part of the "silent service" and its support and training structure. They are dedicating their lives, risking their lives everyday in our great Navy. I believe that we should honor their service and sacrifice by naming a ship the "U.S.S. Bluejacket."

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in this effort to forever honor the bravery, dedication and service of the millions of men and women who have fought to defend this country in our Navy.

Finally, I would like to thank the efforts of Mr. John Thor Newlander of Gales Ferry, Connecticut. Mr. Newlander has served this country in several of our military services, both active and reserve duty, and has worked tirelessly on behalf of our enlisted military personnel and on this resolution. I thank him for his service and his commitment to this worthy endeavor.

INTRODUCTION OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 2002

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. OWENS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. LEE, Mr. FRANK, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. GREEN, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. DELAULO, and Mr. NADLER in introducing the Child Development and Family Employment Act. This legislation reauthorizes the Child Care and Development Block Grant to better meet the child care and after-school care needs of low-income children and families.

Science conclusively demonstrates that children's experiences in their first 5 years of life have major and lasting effects on learning and academic success. Parents undoubtedly are the most significant and important influence on a child's growth. But with 65% of mothers in the labor force raising children under age 6, child care often provides important secondary influences that also greatly affect a child's development. Child care simply is not just babysitting. Early care is an important early learning period and if parents cannot afford to provide their children with high quality care, it is a missed opportunity to help develop a child's school-readiness. Kindergarten teachers report many of their students begin kindergarten cognitively and behaviorally unprepared to learn. For all our youth to achieve in school, we must ensure that they arrive at kindergarten with the skills needed to succeed in school. To do that, parents need to be able to choose quality child care that meets the needs of their children.

Child care assistance must allow eligible families to meet those needs. Since welfare

reform passed in 1996, CCDBG has been a critical work support for many low-income families moving off welfare and many other working poor struggling to remain self-sufficient. Reliable, accessible, and affordable child care is important for families to continue their employment and remain off welfare and for sustaining the economic strength of this country. Poor families who are unable to secure child care assistance pay up to one-third of their income for child care, creating an incredible burden for families struggling to make ends meet and marginalizing the value of going to work or remaining employed. Indeed, families often cite problems with child care as a major reason for leaving employment.

Yet today, CCDBG does not do enough to meet children's developmental needs or parents' employment-related needs. CCDBG only requires states use 4% of its dollars to promote improved quality in child care, an insufficient amount since evaluations indicate that the quality of most care ranges from mediocre to poor. CCDBG also leads to subsidy rates that frequently prohibit parents from choosing or affording child care that meets their children's needs and their own employment needs. Care for infants and toddlers, care for children with special needs, accredited care, non-standard hour care, and quality care in low-income and rural communities can be particularly difficult for parents to choose and afford.

Moreover, CCDBG funding only served 12% of eligible children in 1999. Many states have waiting lists of thousands of families. And though States have use some TANF block grants on child care, budgetary shortfalls and rising welfare caseloads are leading many states to cut their child care and early education budgets at the very time that many parents—who are leaving welfare or struggling to hold jobs in the recession—desperately need child care services.

My bill will improve CCDBG by strengthening child care quality and resources and providing parents greater freedom to choose the type of care they want and need for their child and their family. This bill increases the quality set-aside from 4% to 16%, creates a competitive grant program for States to improve payment rates to providers, and requires child care providers to have pre-service training in child development. This bill also provides money for states to provide stipends to qualified child care providers to boost training, reduce staff turnover, and attract and retain staff—all key goals in improving child care quality. And this bill allocates additional resources so that CCDBG can be expanded to reach one-third of the families for which it was intended.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, until we have a quality and affordable child care program, we will continue to miss the opportunity to maximize the early development of young children and get them ready for learning in school. Child care assistance can make the difference in a child's reaching school age ready to learn, and it can make the difference in a family remaining employed and off welfare. The reauthorization of CCDBG provides Congress with a timely opportunity to achieve this urgent goal and meet our commitment to help meet the needs of low-income children and families. Mr. Speaker, I urge Members of the House to join me and co-sponsor the Child Development and Family Employment Act.

TRIBUTE TO CAROL ELISE BENNETT

HON. TERRY EVERETT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, with the U.S. House of Representatives set to conclude its work for the First Session of the 107th Congress, I would like to add a final contribution to the RECORD as we close the Congressional history book on 2001.

The last twelve months have been so dramatic in their significance upon this body and the nation that it is easy to overlook the many vital human elements of this institution. I choose to honor one here today.

I rise to pay tribute to a player on the Congressional stage who said farewell to this House of Democracy earlier this year; Carol Elise Bennett. For two decades, Carol has been a part of the lives of those who served our nation in the House and Senate.

In 1981, she began covering the Congress for the Washington-Alabama News Report, dutifully informing her statewide radio audience of the efforts of the Alabama Congressional Delegation. She was the longest-serving of all the press assigned to cover Alabama's congressmen and she always performed her work with professionalism and a particularly keen attention to accuracy.

Carol had good reason to be at home around the spotlight, having received formal training in the theatre at the University of British Columbia followed by acting roles on the stage and in film. However, Carol's work and many interests never kept her from helping others. She served as a volunteer reader for recordings for the blind here in Washington for more than a decade.

Since I came to Congress in 1993, I have personally valued my friendship with Carol, and I wish to thank her for her fairness and dedication to pursuing the truth. This institution is a better place because of the hard work of reporters like Carol. I think I can speak for all the Alabama Delegation, both past and present, in wishing Carol Bennett a happy and equally rewarding retirement.

MEDICAL RURAL AMBULANCE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2001

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, across America, Americans have come to expect and rely on our health care system, especially, emergency ambulance service. All too often, for many of us, our first exposure to health care is the local EMS unit that responds to a call for help. Unfortunately, for millions of Americans living in a rural setting, this cornerstone of medical care is on the verge of collapse.

I, for one, am a strong believer in the importance and the necessity of maintaining a strong effective EMS component within our health care system. The question that we must answer, as we debate health care, is, how prepared do we want and expect our